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THANKSGIVING SERMONS,

London: - III PREACHED BEFORE THE

MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

LONDON, AUGUST 6, 1798.

BY THE

REV. J. GRIFFIN, PORTSEA;

AND

REV. T. HAWEIS, LL. B. & M. D.

OF ALDWINKLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

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EXCELSIOR



INTRODUCTION.

THE safe return of the Duff; the health which prevailed on board during the whole voyage; the welcome reception and safe settlement of the Missionaries at the places of their destination; and the remarkable interpositions of Divine Providence from beginning to end of this extraordinary enterprize, were such evident answers to the numerous prayers which had been offered up to God on behalf of the Mission, as loudly demanded the most public acknowledgement of gratitude and praise.

The Directors, therefore, of the Missionary Society, having acquainted the friends of the institution, as soon as they possibly could, with the leading circumstances of the voyage, requested that a day of public thanksgiving might be observed on the sixth of August, being the first Monday in the month, when the Prayer Meetings of the Society are usually held throughout the kingdom, that all whose hearts have been interested in the work, might have an opportunity of uniting, at the same time,



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time, in the same pleasing and reasonable service. They appointed Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, to whose church Captain Wilson belongs, to preach on the occasion, at Surry Chapel in the morning, and Dr. Haweis, as being one of the oldest ministers in the Direction, and who first proposed the Mission to the Pacific Ocean, to preach at Zion Chapel in the evening. These extensive places were soon filled with serious and respectable auditories. Prayers with select psalms and lessons were read by Mr. Eyre and Mr. Charles; Mr. Williams, Mr. Leggett, Mr. Grove, Mr. Nicol, and Mr. Brooksbank, engaged in extempore prayer; and Mr. Cooper, Mr. Townsend, Mr. Platt, Mr. Greatheed, Mr. Pover, and Mr. Ford gave out the hymns. The whole services were conducted with the utmost solemnity; the presence of God was happily experienced by preachers and hearers; and never, perhaps, was gratitude more warmly expressed on any public occasion.

Knowing, however, that verbal acknowledgements, though highly proper, were but a small part of the tribute due to God for such signal benediction, the Directors convened the Society at Haberdashers' Hall the following day, to consider how they could best glorify

him, by maintaining a communication with the Missionaries in the South Seas, and by establishing other Missions in that hemisphere, where such an extensive door of entrance and utterance has been evidently opened.

No sooner was the report read by Mr. Greatheed, than all expressed their cordial approbation of the proposal recommended, and unanimously resolved, " That the Directors " be authorized to employ a ship, belonging to " the Society, on another voyage to the Pacific " Ocean ; for the purposes of supplying our " Brethren, who have settled there, with assi- " stance in their labours ; of adding to their " number, where circumstances may render it " necessary ; and of planting the gospel in " other islands of that ocean, where it shall " appear most eligible from their extent, po- " pulation, or other favourable circum- " stances."

The Rev. Mr. Waugh was in the chair, and the whole business of the meeting was conducted with the most perfect unanimity and satisfaction. Dr. Vanderkemp and the two Dutch Missionaries, who arrived on the thirtieth of last month, were present, and so was the Rev. Mr. Disandt, a Lutheran clergyman, introduced

introduced by Dr. Burckhardt, as sent from Germany by Baron Van Shirnding with proposals of uniting with the Society, and assisting them, both with men and money. It need not be added, that the presence of these respectable foreigners, considerably heightened the general delight of one of the most pleasant meetings, perhaps, since the commencement of this institution.

REPORT

The REPORT of the DIRECTORS at a special General Meeting of the MISSIONARY SOCIETY, convened at HABERDASHERS' HALL, the 7th of August, 1798; for the Purpose of deciding on the Means of maintaining Intercourse with our Brethren in the South Sea Islands, and on the Expediency of sending another Mission to that Part of the World.

BRETHREN,

IN order to enter upon so important a subject, as that of our present report, with dispositions suitable to the discussion of it, it is only necessary to give a moment's serious attention to the circumstances in which we meet. It is not for the sake of form, or of shew, that a day of public thanksgiving has been appointed by the Society. Is there not a cause for every heart, that is interested for the glory of Christ, and the welfare of mankind, to beat, with the most sincere and fervent gratitude, on the present occasion? What is there that the Lord could have done in favour, of the missionary voyage, just completed, which he hath not done? If there be a bye-stander, who never shared in the counsels or the labours which that undertaking required, he must surely be impressed with pleasure and surprize, in learning what the Lord hath performed for us. But those of us, who, from the small beginnings of this Society, have been deeply concerned, and closely occupied in its progress, must be allowed to indulge emotions of thankfulness and admiration, far beyond our power to express. Whilst, however, the Lord's mercies cannot be enumerated by us, and whilst their greatness cannot be suitably represented, we rejoice that it is equally unnecessary, as it would be unsuccessful,

to attempt displaying them. Facts, which are generally known to you, speak so forcibly, as to render words needless. The sublimest language could not magnify their importance, nor can the meanest diminish it. We are called, indeed, at present, to express our sense of the Lord's amazing goodness, not by words, but by actions ; and the investigation of our future measures, as a Missionary Society, can be considered in no other view, than as an enquiry, " What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits?"

We trust, that, with one heart, and one mind, we would employ the powers which the Lord vouchsafes to us, in such a direction and manner, as may, under his blessing, do the greatest good. We are debtors to all mankind, and most gladly would we discharge our whole debt. How should we rejoice, to bring the oppressed African to the glorious liberty of the children of God! How would it gladden our hearts, to see the sun of righteousness arising on the climes of Asia, from whence we first received his healing beams! Unequal, as we feel ourselves, to the extensive concerns already consigned to our management, we are ready to sigh for hosts of Missionaries, and heaps of treasure, to be employed in every quarter, and in every unenlightened country of this globe. But our powers, although greater than we first hoped, come far short of our calls to exertion. The little we can attempt must, therefore, be selected with the greatest caution, lest it should fail of producing that degree of good which it is possible for us to accomplish. We have not only to encounter difficulties from without; we have need to watch and pray against those which arise within us: and we are not only liable to err, from want of knowledge or humility, but even the most grateful sensations of our minds may possibly mislead us. Were we not aware of this danger, we should scarcely, in our present circumstances, propose any enquiry about the

the measures which ought to be next adopted by us. What heart would not say, "Can we doubt *where* our attention should be directed; when our dear Brethren, whom we solemnly devoted two years since to the service of Christ, in the remotest regions, are longing to hear from us; are in need of the conveniences which we enjoy, and may impart to them; are earnestly requesting fellow helpers from amongst us; are assuring us how gladly we shall be received by the hospitable islanders, among whom they labour; and are pointing out to us an expanding sphere of usefulness, perhaps equal to the utmost number of Missionaries we can hope to collect and to equip?"—Yes, Brethren, we feel most tenderly, most respectfully, for these dear servants of our blessed Lord, who have left us so far behind in his work, and who yet are dependent upon us for encouragement and assistance in it. We call to mind also our solemn pledge, that we would never desert them, as we hoped that God would not forsake us.

However, in order to do this, we mean not to relinquish attempts to enlighten other parts of the world, which are yet in heathenish darkness; yea, we acknowledge, Brethren, that we durst not recommend to you such a measure. The vast continents of Asia and Africa, not only present a scene of labour incomparably more extensive than all the islands of the Pacific Ocean; they moreover contain great nations, whose civilized condition, if it were sanctified by the influence of the Gospel, might be highly advantageous to its establishment and progress. The islands of the South Seas were recommended to you, not as the most important objects of evangelization, but as the most accessible, and favourable to our early efforts. The justice of that representation has been confirmed by the experiment which the Lord enabled us to make. With respect to other subjects, which have claimed our attention, excepting at Sierra Leone, we have

not yet been able to carry them into execution in the manner that we wished. It is expected we shall shortly make an attempt in the southern part of Africa. Some of our Brethren, it is well known, had devoted their substance, and their lives, to the object of a mission to the East Indies; but no entrance there, into British territories, has yet been obtained. And with respect to some other civilized parts of Asia, to which we might gain access, we have, as yet, been able to find but few Missionaries, whose knowledge and experience appeared adequate to the undertaking. The troubles which affect a great part of the world, in consequence of the present war, together with the uncertainty of its event, conduce to suspend some important missionary operations. We wait, in hope that the Lord will, ere long, raise up able instruments, and open effectual doors, for spreading the Gospel in the most extensive countries, and among the most civilized nations of the Heathen. In the mean time, what can we do better than to follow up a mission which has hitherto been favoured beyond our hopes, and which may be carried on toward perfection, by those means and instruments, with which the Lord has been pleased to furnish us in a remarkable degree.

We therefore deem it adviseable, without delay, to recommend some plan for revisiting our dear Brethren in the South Sea Islands, and for reinforcing their number in those situations, which evidently require an immediate accession of Missionaries. Such are the Marquesas, which as yet are only provided with the solitary labours of one young servant of Christ; and the extensive Archipelago, called the Friendly Islands, which are calling in vain for adequate assistance from nine of our Brethren, placed in that important scene of evangelical labour. We have, however, no prospect of accomplishing these purposes effectually, but by endeavouring again to equip and send out a ship for

the purpose, if the Lord shall raise up proper persons to conduct the voyage. We cannot now attempt to express our own, nor *your* sense, of what is due to those invaluable Brethren, who, with sacrifices of all that is dear to life, so cheerfully undertook, and so admirably have fulfilled, the charge of the former voyage. They have finished, with joy, a course of inexpressible anxiety and labour. We bid them welcome to that rest, and that honour, which ought to follow their inestimable services to the cause in which we have engaged! But where can we look again for such sacrifices, or such exertions! May God direct and provide! Trusting in Him, who hath done such great things for us, we hope it may be found practicable to send out a vessel under the conduct of able and faithful persons, to convey to our distant Brethren, those proofs of our love to them, and of our concern for the work to which they are devoted, that every bond of piety, humanity, and gratitude, obliges us to afford.

Yet, in recommending to you, Brethren, an attempt, which, if the Lord enables us to accomplish it, must be attended with great expence, and still greater risk, we should be inexcusable, if we did not endeavour to render the objects, and the effects of the voyage, as grand and beneficial as they can be made. We trust, that it is capable of answering purposes which will satisfy very enlarged desires of usefulness. We have already admitted, that the Islands of the South Seas were chosen to be the scenes of our first efforts, not because they were of greater importance than other parts of the globe, but because they were judged more accessible, and on the whole, more favourable to such a mission as we could undertake. It was on a similar account, that the former voyage was not directed to the more extensive countries of the Pacific Ocean, but to those islands where we expected to find the greatest docility and cordiality in the natives. It was in this point of view, that the island of Otaheite formed

formed the foreground of our prospect. A laborious investigation of the reports of every preceding navigator convinced us, however, that a friendly reception, and a safe residence for our Missionaries, might reasonably be expected, in some groups of islands with which Otaheite had no intercourse. Our dear friends, who embarked in the Duff, directly and deeply interested as they were in the event, formed the same judgment from the information that we laid before them. They ventured to attempt the Friendly Islands, though variously and inconsistently represented by former voyagers, and the Marquesas, though at that time but little known. The Lord, in every instance, exceeded our hopes, and disappointed our fears. In three distinct clusters of islands, to none of which the Gospel could apparently have been communicated from the others, it is now happily planted. What an encouragement is this for us to encounter some labour, and some hazard, in order to sow the seed of the word in other islands, to which it is not likely to spread from those places which have already received it! Yea, what an obligation is laid upon us, to trust the Lord farther than we have yet done; when hitherto he has so graciously rebuked our unbelief! Never again let us doubt, that the hearts of all are in his hand! Nor let us decline a trial of such places as are more extensive and important than those which we at first attempted; although we are informed that their inhabitants (mostly of the same race and language with those who now love and revere our Missionaries) are less docile in their manners, and have at times committed outrages on visitors of a very different description. If, for instance, the extensive country of New Zealand was inhabited by men ferocious as lions, we know that the Lord could change them into lambs. We are even assured, upon indubitable authority, that some principal natives of the country just mentioned, (at which, in our former voyage, we durst not propose to

to touch) are now familiarly acquainted with, and cordially disposed toward our countrymen, who have repeatedly visited them from Norfolk Island. Let us not entertain a momentary suspicion, that our dear Brethren, who are applying to us for assistance to spread the knowledge of Christ, will shrink from that degree of hazard, which, notwithstanding such favorable circumstances, may yet be apprehended. They have counted the cost; and their enquiry is, we doubt not, simply *where*, and *how*, they may most effectually promote the cause of their crucified Redeemer. They certainly are not aiming to "boast in another man's line of things, made ready to their hand." If they visit their Brethren and fore-runners, they will gladly be "enlarged by them to preach the Gospel in regions beyond them;" and any of them, who may be necessarily detained to assist their Brethren in a work already begun, will reluctantly forego an opportunity to emulate their example, by carrying the Gospel where it never had been known.

But enough of this. Of all fears, those are least grounded in experience, which represent our Missionaries to be in danger of relinquishing the work they so cheerfully undertake. A single, un-alarming failure, serves to excite our thankfulness for the general steadiness and resolution of our Brethren, whether in Africa, or the distant islands; and our higher esteem of that act of Christian heroism, to which it afforded both an occasion and a foil. It is more needful to observe, that, by naming one of the numerous extensive countries in the Pacific Ocean, we do not at present mean to recommend this in particular, as a certain object for the mission. Our minds are not yet sufficiently informed, to decide upon the precise places that are most proper to be next attempted. We propose to search, with the most earnest diligence, every source of information, impartially to lay before our Brethren, who devote themselves to the mission, all the facts we can collect

lect for their instruction; to recommend, to their peculiar attention, those places which we judge most suitable to their talents, and most in need of their labours; and to advise them to make a fixed choice of their objects, and of their companions in the work; from which, it may perhaps be better for them afterward not to depart, without a sanction from the majority of their Brethren upon the voyage.

It is upon the judgment and experience of our beloved Brethren, who have returned from the former voyage, that we ground a confident assertion respecting the practicability of that which we now propose. All our Brethren, now at the South Sea Islands, may be visited and assisted, and several of the more extensive islands explored, sufficiently to ascertain whether the Missionaries designed for them may be left there with safety; within an equal space of time, and at an equal expence, with that employed in the former voyage.

We have room to expect that the East-India Company would again freight the ship from Canton, by which the expence of the voyage might, as before, be partly reduced, and the principal objection to the undertaking would thus, in some measure, be removed. But we apprehend it will be entirely obviated, if we consider, that hitherto the religious world have discovered the most liberal and cordial inclination to render our funds proportionate to our needful exertions; that our undertaking to the South Sea Islands has excited a very lively and general sympathy; that it is now recommended to their regard by striking instances of the divine approbation; that the expence of the voyage, though heavy, is but a temporary exertion; and, above all, that pecuniary exertions constitute the *only* sacrifice likely to be made in this mission; and if compared with the health, and consequent usefulness of our Missionaries, it must surely be accounted a small sacrifice indeed.

MERCIES RECEIVED:

A CLAIM

FOR ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE.

SERMON,

PREACHED

AT A PUBLIC THANKSGIVING

OF THE

MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

SURRY CHAPEL, AUGUST 6, 1798.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN GRIFFIN,

OF PORTSEA, HAMPSHIRE.

C

SERMON I.

EPHESIANS iii. 20, 21.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us—Unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end—Amen.

WE live in an eventful period. The providence of God is unfolding the Book of Prophecy, and explaining its predictions by their accomplishment. Perhaps the annals of the world do not present a period in which calculation, respecting civil affairs, has been more evidently wrong, or in which the prophecies were more clearly fulfilled, than the present. Prophecy always carries two aspects: it frowns on the enemies of God, and of human kind; but smiles upon those who aim at his honour, and the happiness of their fellow men.

Among the many painful events which shock the feelings of humanity, we have one most pleasing circumstance to contemplate. While the sword of war is depopulating Europe, and storms of wrath are shaking terribly the nations, the servants of the Prince of Peace are pursuing the eternal interests of immortal souls.

We are met this day, not to rejoice in victories, nor to sing of garments rolled in blood, but to record the high praises of our God, for the propitious occurrences which have eminently marked the efforts of the Missionary Society.

Some persons have already asked what success have you obtained, that calls for this public thanksgiving? Would it not be more suitable to wait till you know whether any of the Heathens are converted by your means? We answer, it is probable, were we to wait till we have intelligence that some are converted, the same objectors would say, it would be better to wait till sufficient length of time had given proof that their conversion was real.

Before the Temple was built, David and the Princes of Israel gave public thanks to God, that he had inclined their hearts to prepare for it.— Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation; and David said, “blessed be thou, “ Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. “ Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, “ and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: “ for all that is in Heaven, and in the Earth, is “ thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou “ art exalted as head above all. Both riches and “ honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, “ and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy “ hand it is to make great, and to give strength “ unto all. Now, therefore, God, we thank thee, “ and praise thy glorious name.” It is true, they had only prepared for the building, but the preparation for the edifice was as necessary to the completion of the work, as the Temple was for the purpose of divine worship. Our public thanksgiving on this occasion is as seasonable, and as proper, as theirs. We have had the same authority to act upon, the same spirit to influence us, and our efforts are directed to the same end.

But others say it has too much the appearance of sounding our own praises, and trumpeting our own fame. We feel this objection most keenly; not because we think it applies to us, not because we are discouraged by it, but because it is a plain indication of the ingratitude of the objector's heart,

and because the remark will equally apply to the public thanksgiving of David and the Princes of Israel.

You, my dear hearers, have long been lifting up holy hands, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for a divine blessing on your undertaking. The Father of mercies has heard your supplications, even beyond your expectation, and now claims your grateful acknowledgment. It appears very fit, in the nature of things, that prayer should be succeeded by praises. Our Saviour teaches it in the conduct of the Samaritan Leper; and the Apostle exemplifies it in the chapter from which I have selected my text. For having supplicated many important blessings for the Ephesians, and being persuaded that God, who had begun the good work of grace in their hearts, would certainly bestow the favours he requested, he bursts forth into grateful adoration — “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us—unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end—Amen.”

In these words the Apostle fixes the attention of the Ephesians, on the first cause of all their religious experience: the power of God working in them. He excites their gratitude to the author of their mercies—to Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, world without end. He directs them to the consideration of the divine character, as a ground for farther encouragement—to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, be glory, &c. I am to follow his example, as nearly as the nature of the occasion will admit, by endeavouring to exhibit to the Missionary Society—the interesting events which claim its admiration—the weighty reasons which excite its gratitude—and the pleasing considerations which should prove its encouragement.

I. The interesting events which claim admiration.

The

The first event which we ought to admire is the *communication of a missionary spirit*.

God has most evidently impressed on His people a lively concern for the salvation of the Heathen. This is one of the most pleasing signs of the time. The church has too long been disposed to retire within its own circle, rather than to enlarge its borders. Christians have been too insensible to the important duty of imparting the Gospel to Pagan nations ; and ministers have little considered the extent of their commission, “ go into all the world, “ and preach the Gospel to every creature.” If the conversion of unenlightened countries formed part of our prayers, it entered very little into our councils: and we have prayed for it as a business in which we had no immediate concern, rather than as a subject which ought to have engaged our united efforts.

But at length, towards the close of the eighteenth century, God has remarkably imparted to the souls of many thousands, both in this, and in other countries, an earnest solicitude for the salvation of miserable Pagans.

The lively sparks of Christian zeal, communicated from the sacred altar, to the minds of some highly favoured servants of God, coming into contact, have burst into a holy flame, and spread in all directions. This heavenly fire will not easily be extinguished : it will, we trust, be as lasting as that on the Jewish altar, and much more influential and extensive. Fanned by the Divine Spirit, and fed by the fuel of the faithful promises, it will increase on every side, till the benighted nations shall feel its energy, and walk in its light. It affords no small consolation to the church, and presents no weak motive for gratitude, that the duty of Christians, to send the Gospel to unenlightened tribes, is now better understood, and more sensibly felt, than it has been since the apostolic age ; and we hope that every year, nay, every month, will cast

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some new light on the subject, and inspire the church with increasing ardour.

Who but those, who shut their eyes against the light, can deny that there is a *true* missionary spirit in the Christian world? The number of gospel ministers and real Christians who appear interested in the subject, the generosity of their subscriptions, the fervency of their prayers, and the nature of their exertions, are facts which speak for themselves.

The universal spread of the Gospel is a subject of divine prediction. "The Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations." "They shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them." But how shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? Now can that which is so much the subject of revelation; that, which we are authorized to expect; that, which we see beginning to be accomplished; can that be attributed to any other agency than his, who is the author of the predictions? If the missionary spirit did not originate with God, why was it not felt and acted upon before? The duty of missions to the Heathen was as clearly revealed; the discharge of it as necessary, and the means nearly as great as now. To what cause, then, can we ascribe this change of opinion, of sensation, and of conduct, but to him who said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts?"

The second thing which claims our attention is the formation of a Missionary Society. Men were originally formed for society: without this union little could either be performed or enjoyed. Persons, closely united, can perform, with facility, what it would be presumptuous in an individual to attempt. The combined talents and graces in the societies of men are what the muscles in the animal

structure

structure are to each other. It is the muscular co-operation in the human body which enables it to perform wonderful acts of agility and strength. And what may we not expect from you, my dear friends, if, by divine influence, you continue in your present undivided strength, and unabating zeal in the cause of Jesus Christ? The formation of the Society has given publicity to your designs, and energy to your actions. It has engaged the interest of many, who would otherways never have thought of the subject, and called forth your own power into exercise, which might have lain dormant and unproductive.

When we consider the different denominations of which you are composed, and contemplate the commencement of your operations, your progress and success, we are constrained to say, surely this is the finger of God! Is there nothing like the power of divine grace manifested on the hearts of men, when we see them lay aside ancient customs, break through old prejudices, and unite, as the heart of one man, in one object? Is there nothing like divine influence, when men, differing in their education, habits of thinking, and connections, imbibe the same spirit, and use every method to stimulate each other to acts of benevolence to the Heathen? There is too much of disinterestedness, of general philanthropy, and of brotherly-love, displayed in this Institution, to be attributed to any other cause, than that of divine influence.

A third thing which claims our attention, and by which the Divine Power is manifest, is, *the commencement of missionary labours.*

Missionary societies are, comparatively, of little value without instruments to accomplish their benevolent designs. Your writing and preaching at home will not convert the Heathen abroad. There must be men of piety, wisdom, self-denial, and zeal, to be engaged in the important work. Such,

we

we believe, God has raised up, and sent forth to their arduous employ.

Who could have conjectured, five years ago, that near thirty Missionaries would now be labouring in the islands of the Southern Ocean? Whoever reflects for a moment on the importance, and the difficulties, of obtaining suitable persons for the design, and the nature of their engagements, will be induced to wonder that so many should tender their services in so short a time; and will be constrained to say, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

It has been objected, that the men you have sent out were ignorant, indigent, and captious; that they had nothing to sacrifice, and had bettered their condition. There is no such thing as satisfying the disposition of some persons. Like a jaundiced eye, it discolours every object it sees, and disfigures even perfect beauty itself. It is a query, if a hundred missions were established, if either of them would furnish in the aggregate, more eminent and suitable ability. These objections by no means apply; for poverty neither dissolves the ties of nature, nor destroys the love of one's country! Nor are they well founded: for several of the Missionaries went from respectable connections, easy circumstances, and flattering prospects; and some others of them would have credited most of the pulpits in the Metropolis. Some small difference of opinion among them is rather a proof that they are men of thought and reflection, and consequently more fit for their employ than men of weak minds, and servile tempers, unequal to the difficulties of their station, and incapable of judging and acting for themselves. Whenever a body of men ceases to debate, it is a proof that it ceases to think, and no wonder then if it should soon cease to act.

To what cause, beside the influence of the spirit of God, can we attribute the readiness with which

these righteous men have left all that is dear to them in their native country, and entered upon their arduous work, with all the real and imaginary difficulties before them? Consider the inefficacy of human persuasion to induce a man to leave his country, his family, and his friends, and to expose himself to a thousand inconveniences and difficulties, and that, too, without the prospect of wordly honour or emoluments. Consider how a man would naturally reason with himself before he could overcome the powerful pleas of nature and of habit, and enter upon a mode of life which exposes him to dangers and death. Try the experiment upon yourself, and ask, shall I offer myself to the Society to become a Missionary to the Heathen? Could you put this question seriously, a number of others would, no doubt, immediately arise in the mind. Am I called to be a Missionary? Am I qualified for it? Are my motives pure; my faith, patience, and zeal sufficient for the work? What will my friends think of it? Perhaps my fitness may be disputed, and my motives suspected.—Can I not be as useful at home? and are there not many more equal to the task than myself? Such questions would excite in the mind a thousand fears, and these create as many objections. And can we suppose their minds differed from ours, so as to render them insensible to these reasonings?

No doubt they had their difficulties to surmount, and objections to oppose, both from carnal policy, and the affectionate entreaties of friends, but they rose superior to all. Their zeal for God, and love to immortal souls, forced their way through every barrier, and constrained them to act: for it was the power of God working in them, to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

Fourthly, The prosperity of your missionary voyage excites our wonder and our praises. A thousand pleasing sensations are produced in the mind, while we trace the leadings of Providence, and the auspicious

spicious occurrences, which stamp divine approbation on your efforts. The long chain of propitious events, which has perpetually attended the voyage, binds our hearts stronger than ever to the miffionary cause. While you were enquiring what was the most eligible method of conveying your miffionaries to the Southern Islands, and even before you had concerned yourselves about a captain, God had provided one. His presence forbids my relating several things of him, which would give you pleasure to hear. But I must suppress my feelings, and he should suppress his, while I mention one thing, at least, in order to excite yours. Before the Society was formed, and while the subject was but in embryo, God prepared his mind for the work he has so nobly executed. The minister, whom he had been accustomed to hear, described, one Lord's day morning, the nature and strength of Abraham's faith, in leaving Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing whither he went. Our friend made a personal application of the subject, and said, "What has my faith enabled me to do, or to suffer for God?" Distressed with fearing that he had no faith, or that it was not genuine, he earnestly prayed, Lord teach me what I shall do, to honour thee, and benefit my fellow men! That very evening, returning from worship, he carried with him that number of the Evangelical Magazine, in which was mentioned the desirableness of sending Missionaries to the South Sea Islands, and the different methods of conveying them just stated. While he was reading, a deep impression was made on his mind, that if the Society should engage a ship, he would voluntarily become their captain. This determination, at first, gave him some painful sensations, but soon after it set his heart at rest. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes!

Every thing relating to this part of the subject is admirable. Consider the remarkable preservation

of the lives and the health of all on board; the rapidity of the voyage; the favourable reception of the Missionaries, and the safe return of the ship; and then ask, Has not God been with them of a truth? I have only given you a rough sketch of this portrait, intending to leave it to the more masterly strokes of my Revered Father to perfect, and present it to you in the evening.

Having briefly stated some of the leading occurrences relative to the Missionary Society, and shown how far they appear to be directed by him who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, I pass on to present to you some weighty reasons which should excite your gratitude.

The missionary spirit which has enlivened the churches, and communicated the light of the Gospel to Heathen lands, may be considered *as the dawn of the happiest period of the church, and of the world.*

The times, events, and predictions unite to establish this position. It is probable, posterity will consider the display of this Christian benevolence in the establishment of Missionary Societies in different parts of the world, as the beginning of an æra, more interesting than that of the reformation. Nay, some have conceived, that the happy epoch, which is represented as succeeding the fall of Antichrist, will date its commencement from the formation of this noble institution.

Future historians will trace the pure spirit of Christian philanthropy, which has displayed itself in Europe and America, and thereby exhibit to the church, the various means by which the Gospel spread from continent to continent, and from island to island. The universal spread of the Gospel shall secure the greatest blessing to the world. Then man, meeting man, shall embrace his brother and his friend, and “learn war no more.” “For they shall all know me, from the least to the

"greatest, saith the Lord." Could you see all the pleasing effects of your exertions, your hearts would swell with joy, and your souls long to be dismissed from the body, that they might have room to expand.

In the next place, consider as an argument for gratitude, that many of these blessings are given as evident answers to prayer.

When God has designed to bestow peculiar favours on his church, he has generally poured out a spirit of grace and supplication in a remarkable degree. This appears in the case of Daniel. In the first year of the reign of Darius, Daniel understood, from the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the deliverance of Israel was near; and he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek, by prayer and supplication, the promised deliverance, and the renewal of the ancient religion. And while he was praying, Gabriel, commissioned from God, said to him, "At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth." So ready was the Lord to grant his request, that an herald was immediately dispatched to inform him that his prayer had prevailed.

It is likewise evident in the case of Nehemiah who, when he had learnt the deplorable state of the city and temple of Jerusalem, sat down, and wept, and prayed before the God of Heaven, and concluded a long address by saying, "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayers of thy servants who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day." Nor does he forget to remark, that it was God that put it into his heart to be concerned for Jerusalem, and that he prospered, because the good hand of his God was upon him.

The spirit of prayer is the peculiar gift of God. When we see many thousands in earnest with him for some spiritual blessing, we have good reason to expect

expect the favour will be communicated; especially when the thing desired is a subject of the promise. That God has poured out a spirit of supplication on the behalf of the Heathen, on many thousands in these kingdoms, is as evident as that he has given them being. Who ever heard or read of such a general and fervent spirit of prayer, for the same object, as we have recently witnessed? I need not refer you to the declarations of those, who have told you how earnestly they have wrestled with God for the conversion of sinners; nor need I call your recollection to the monthly prayer meetings in this city, and all parts of the kingdom: your own experience affords you ample proof that God has imparted an earnest concern for the spread of the Gospel,

Who can count the number of prayers that have been offered to the Throne of Grace, in less than two years, on the behalf of the Missionaries, the Captain, and the Mariners! But who, that compares them with the divine conduct, can refrain from saying, "Thou art the God that heareth prayer."

The language of Ezra and Nehemiah will teach us to ascribe those things to God, which the men of the world would attribute to mere chance.

These things afford us matter for gratitude, as they prove to demonstration, the kind and unremitting attention of God to our prayers, and present to us a strong presumption, if not absolute proof, that the spirit of prayer was from him. It was not the effusion of an heated imagination, nor the flash of a moment, but the effect of the spirit's influence, of zeal for the divine honour, and of love for immortal souls. From the number and nature of the facts recited, we have as strong proofs, as the length of time, and the description of circumstances would lead us reasonably to expect, that our design is approved of God, and that "the time, the set time, " to favour Zion, is come,"

Another

Another thing which calls for gratitude, is *the pleasing effects these events have produced in our own country.*

Whatever is calculated to enliven and invigorate the church, is no doubt a valuable blessing. That the Missionary Society has been a means of doing it, no one, who is not swayed by prejudice, or blinded by ignorance, will deny. These effects are as evident as the sun beams; for they are not only seen, but felt. The Missionary Spirit has enlarged the minds of ministers and people. It has filled our assemblies with hearers, our pulpits with fervour, and our souls with devotion. It has roused the zeal of dormant professors, and enflamed the hearts of lukewarm Christians. It has opened the hands even of the penurious, and presented a noble object of benevolence to the liberal. It has inspired various denominations with love for each other, and brought them into contact, and thereby stamped a new character on the religious public.

The union of different parties, the success of your efforts, and the prosperity of the voyage, have excited the attention of numerous bye-standers, or silenced the objections of many gainsayers, and secured the friendship of others, who before were doubtful whether the cause were of God. These things should excite your gratitude, and be a spur to new exertions.

This important subject has also engaged much of the attention and conversation of a great number of Ministers and Christians, and has turned them from the politics of this world, to the concerns of immortal souls. The missionary zeal has put Christian Societies in motion; and motion and exercise are as necessary for their welfare, as they are for the human body. The former, like the latter, are debilitated, and almost useless, without action; like air and water, they are contaminated by stagnation, and must be kept in motion in order to be useful. You, who know most

of society in general, and of Christian churches in particular, know it is necessary to keep them in exercise, in order to keep them alive.

Frequent meetings, in which the people have something to say and do, as well as something to hear: such as prayer-meetings, conferences, meetings of young persons, of children, societies for the benefit of the poor, and consultations among the principal people in a congregation, about the best methods of promoting the interest of the Gospel, are great means, and I mention them only as such, of preserving and quickening the zeal, both of minister and people, and of giving to the congregation an energy of action, of which it would otherwise be destitute.

The Missionary Spirit has imparted this noble energy to a great number of congregations and country associations, and these have happily been the means of spreading the Gospel through a number of towns and villages around them. The benefit of this influence is reciprocal. As the blood put in motion at the heart is forced to the extremities of the body, and from thence returns again to supply that organ with new life, so the Missionary Spirit, set in motion in the Metropolis of the kingdom, extends its influence to the extremities of the British Empire, and returns back to the Society again, to give new strength to its exertions.

Various institutions, abroad and at home, for the noble purpose of spreading the Gospel in the world, have originated from this, and are in union with it. Who that knew the state of religion in many countries in this kingdom, and knows it now, but will readily admit that the Missionary Society has done good at home, and is calculated to do a considerable degree more.

Ministers have been induced to encourage gifted members of their churches to go into the neighbouring villages on the Lord's Day, to teach such as are sitting in darkness, and the shadow of death: the people

people have willingly engaged in the work, and in many places the fields are white already for the harvest. These are blessed signs, the effect of which no mind can calculate. These things should fill us with joy, and inspire us with gratitude.

The personal advantages many of you have received from the Missionary spirit should excite your gratitude.

Were there no immediate benefit resulting from it to the Heathen, we have personally sufficient reason to call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to bless the name of the Lord.

Revered Fathers, and Brethren in the Ministry, have not you abundant reason to give glory to God for the Missionary zeal, which has warmed your hearts, and which still glows in your bosom? Has it not frequently led you to the Throne of Grace, with pungent sensations, and humble confessions of your past indifference to the great duties of your station. Has it not filled your soul with real grief, that you have lived so many years to so little purpose, and that you have exerted yourselves no more in the cause of your Lord and Redeemer? Has it not forced you before God with earnest supplications to the Holy Spirit, that he would inspire your soul with more zeal for the divine honour, more love for immortal souls, and to grant you greater success in your ministry? Has it not induced you to study how to preach to be useful, rather than to be thought learned and eloquent, made you more solicitous to know if you were successful in your work, and led you with earnestness to enquire by what methods you could best honour God, and benefit the souls of your people? Has it not made your sermons glow with holy fervour, and your ministerial visits to be spiritual and profitable? Nay, has it not been a means, through the power of the Holy Ghost, of leading your minds into deeper discoveries of the nature of Christianity; of reviving

the work of God in your own soul; and of filling it with the most sublime satisfaction?

Dear Brethren, and friends in Christ Jesus, have not many of you some personal reason to be thankful for the Christian zeal which has invigorated the churches? In reflecting much on the state of the Heathen world, you have been induced more than ever to prize a revelation from God, and the blessing of a gospel ministry. It has made you feel a more lively concern for your own soul, and the souls of your relatives and neighbours. Public and private worship has been attended by you with more frequency, spirituality, and profit. It has made you lament that you have lived so much for yourself, and so little for God; that your time, your gifts, and your property, were not more devoted to him and his cause. Nor has it made you lament *only* that you have done so little for him, but it has made you act for him. It has often drawn your attention from the busy affairs of this life, and fixed it on the concerns of eternity; and while you have been diligent in business, you have been fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

But there is another personal motive for gratitude which I ought not to forget to impress on your minds. By the establishment of this institution, God has opened to most of you a greater sphere of usefulness than ever you had before, or possibly could have had, without it. Many of you have moved in a very useful sphere, but it has not extended beyond your own town, county, or kingdom at furthest; but now, in connection with the Missionary Society, it encircles the globe. The greatest honour God can confer on a creature, next to making him like himself, and blessing him with his presence, is to make him useful in his cause. To be any way employed for God is an unspeakable honour; but perhaps there is no employment this side heaven, more honourable, than that of being instrumental in establishing and

and conducting the affairs of this Society, excepting that of a Missionary. Every new success, that may attend the Society, will lay you under increasing obligation to be thankful that God has engaged you in the business.

But perhaps I am addressing others, who, like some in the town where I reside, will have reason to bless God "through all the successions of an endless eternity" for the Missionary cause. The novelty of the subject excited their curiosity; the benevolence of the Society their admiration; and the state of the Heathens their pity. But their attention was soon turned from the state of Pagan nations to themselves, and they wondered they should feel that concern for them they had never exercised for their own souls, and that admiration for the Society they had never felt for Jesus Christ. In this way the spirit of truth convinced them of their deplorable condition as sinners, the necessity of a new heart, and of an interest in the blood of atonement. He hath also sealed peace on their conscience by the gospel, and directed their feet into the way of holiness. Should not one Heathen be converted by our means, the salvation of the persons alluded to will afford sufficient reason for us to be eternally grateful. Should I be addressing any of this description this morning, surely I need not attempt to convince you, that you have the greatest personal reason to unite with the Apostle in ascriptions of praise; *for if you hold your tongues the very stones would cry out.*

The last reason I shall mention, tending to excite your gratitude, is that the things I have stated stand connected with the salvation of souls; and, consequently, the completion of the church and the eternal honour of God.

Who can appreciate the value of immortal spirits! Their existence is endless like the existence of him who created them. Eternity awaits

them

them of felicity or misery, according to the state in which they quit the present world.

Think of the deplorable condition of the heathen. Many millions of them are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death; as ignorant of the *true* character of God, how he is to be worshipped, and how they are to be saved, as a man born blind is of light; and as destitute of true devotion to him as the icy mountains which envelope the poles are of heat. Think of the vast number of these immortal spirits, which quit their tabernacles every year strangers to God and to his son Jesus Christ; and then ask yourselves, if you are not bound to give unfeigned thanks to God, that there are various societies of good men, whose earnest solicitude for their salvation is attended with noble and corresponding exertions, to send them the gospel of the blessed God?

How will it fill your souls with joy, when you meet around the throne, to see myriads from Pagan nations entering the realms of blis, swelling the general song of Hallelujah to God and the lamb, and saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!" What unspeakable, what inconceiveable pleasure must it afford you at the great day to behold the Missionaries approaching the throne, and, pointing to souls redeemed from among the heathen, saying, "Here Lord are we and the children thou hast given us."

The Apostle calls upon the whole church to give glory to God; and we with propriety may follow his example. The term *Church* is significant and comprehensive; including the general assembly of the first born, who are written in heaven. It of course is not confined to any sect or distinct class of Christians, but embraces all who worship God in the spirit, whether on earth or in heaven. We may

may therefore justly call upon the church to unite in this delightful service, as, we trust, what we are engaged in is connected with the interest of the whole.

The establishment of Missionary Societies is a part of the great plan of Providence and redemption. It is one of the links in the great chain of divine events, which is to connect the purposes of the covenant of grace with the salvation of the elect, and the honour of the divine character. The angels united their joyful acclamations, when Immanuel entered our world; and there is joy in heaven when one sinner repenteth. Shall we, then, who know the value of souls, we who have been redeemed by the blood of the covenant, and called by the power of the Holy Ghost, be silent in our praises, when the glad news of salvation is conveyed to the Heathen? God is unfolding his character, and his designs of mercy to the world; is hastening his kingdom and accomplishing the number of his chosen.

Our praises are to be directed to the father, through Christ Jesus; for he his worthy. All our blessings are procured by him, and flow through him. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

III. My last object is to direct you to the consideration of the divine character as a ground for your future encouragement.—"He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

If our success depended upon our own exertions, we should relinquish the design in despair. But the cause is the Lord's, and we are only instruments. "He has said my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." When we contrast our desires and our faith with his power, we discover the contracted nature of our prayers and the

the weakness of our confidence—" he is able to do more than we can ask or think."

It was the consideration of the divine power, as being able to accomplish all the designs of mercy, that filled the mind of an imprisoned Apostle with encouragement and consolation. The nature of the Roman government, the pride of philosophers, the bigotry of the Jews, the barbarism of surrounding nations, presented to mere human efforts insurmountable difficulties in spreading Christianity. Its doctrines and precepts were in direct opposition to the prejudices of the Jews, the philosophy of the Greeks, and the passions of ungodly men. " But it was the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The Apostle was therefore confident that the gospel would not only surmount opposition; but that, like a wide sea, it would flow over the Roman empire into barbarous nations, and finally overspread the world. It was the cause of God; and Omnipotence was engaged to make it prosper. It is as much his cause now, as then; and he is equally concerned for it. Like the Apostle, turn your eyes from the difficulties, which tend to impede the work, to the power that is to accomplish it.

The power of God here may include his authority, as sovereign of the world. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. His power in this sense exceeds our thoughts, as much as time is exceeded by eternity. It may allude to him, as the author of redemption. His plans are much more extensive than the utmost stretch of our minds.

He is able, therefore, because the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus are sufficient for the salvation of the millions of the elect, which no man is able to number. Or it may allude to him as the cause of all religious influence. He is able to enlighten the darkest understanding, and to renew the most depraved and hardened heart,

These

These considerations afford us encouragement to expect numerous and suitable Missionaries. When he gives the word, great shall be the company of them that preach it. How improbable was it some years since, that those who are now engaged, both as ministers at home, and Missionaries abroad, should ever be employed in such a work as this! Is his hand shortened that he cannot save, or his ear heavy that he cannot hear?

No longer ago than the year 1792, Mr. Thomas, a baptist Missionary in the East Indies, came from thence in the same ship with our friend, whose services have been so very acceptable to the Society, and whose safe return gave occasion to this meeting. At that time he was fortifying his mind against the arguments of his fellow passenger in favour of Christianity, by various objections to it; deeply entrenching himself in prejudices against its doctrines from the impure lives of its professors; and building towering expectations of a life of ease and pleasure. Had Mr. Thomas then been informed, that the next time his companion should sail on the great deep, it would be as captain of a ship voluntarily conveying Missionaries to the South Sea Islands, would he have placed any confidence in the assertion, or even have thought it probable? Is not the Lord as able to raise up more Missionaries, as he was to raise up the last, and the captain who conveyed them? Perhaps there are some now at the schools of philosophy, who pity your credulity and laugh at your enthusiasm, of whom the Lord may soon say, "These are chosen vessels to bear my name among the Heathen." Perhaps there are numerous mechanics, men of strong natural powers, who are yet in their sins, and know as little of the Missionary Society as you do of them, whom the Lord by different means may bring to the knowledge of the Saviour, and say to them, "Go and preach the preaching that I bid you." Yea, perhaps, there

there are some here this morning, whose hearts burn with holy zeal to offer their services to the Society: for when God has a work to perform, he will always find instruments; and if he will work, who can hinder? Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?

The consideration of the Divine Power *encourages you, as to the success of your Missions.* Every mission may not answer your expectation, for God may try your faith and patience, as well as encourage your hopes; but most assuredly you shall not labour in vain, nor spend your strength for nought; for what can stand before Omnipotence? It may be said, God has ceased to work miracles. But it should be remembered that many things, if related at once, and viewed in the aggregate, would appear miraculous, which, if stated in detail, and traced in their progress, would only appear remarkable. God has recently wrought wonders of judgments, and these are generally designed to pave the way for wonders of mercies. He, that by his grace converted our hearts, can surely convert the heathen; and he, who made way for the spirit of the gospel in this kingdom, can open a way for it in the Pagan world. Yea, and he will do it; for every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low.

The power of God affords you encouragement to *expect seasonable and ample means for the carrying on of the work.*

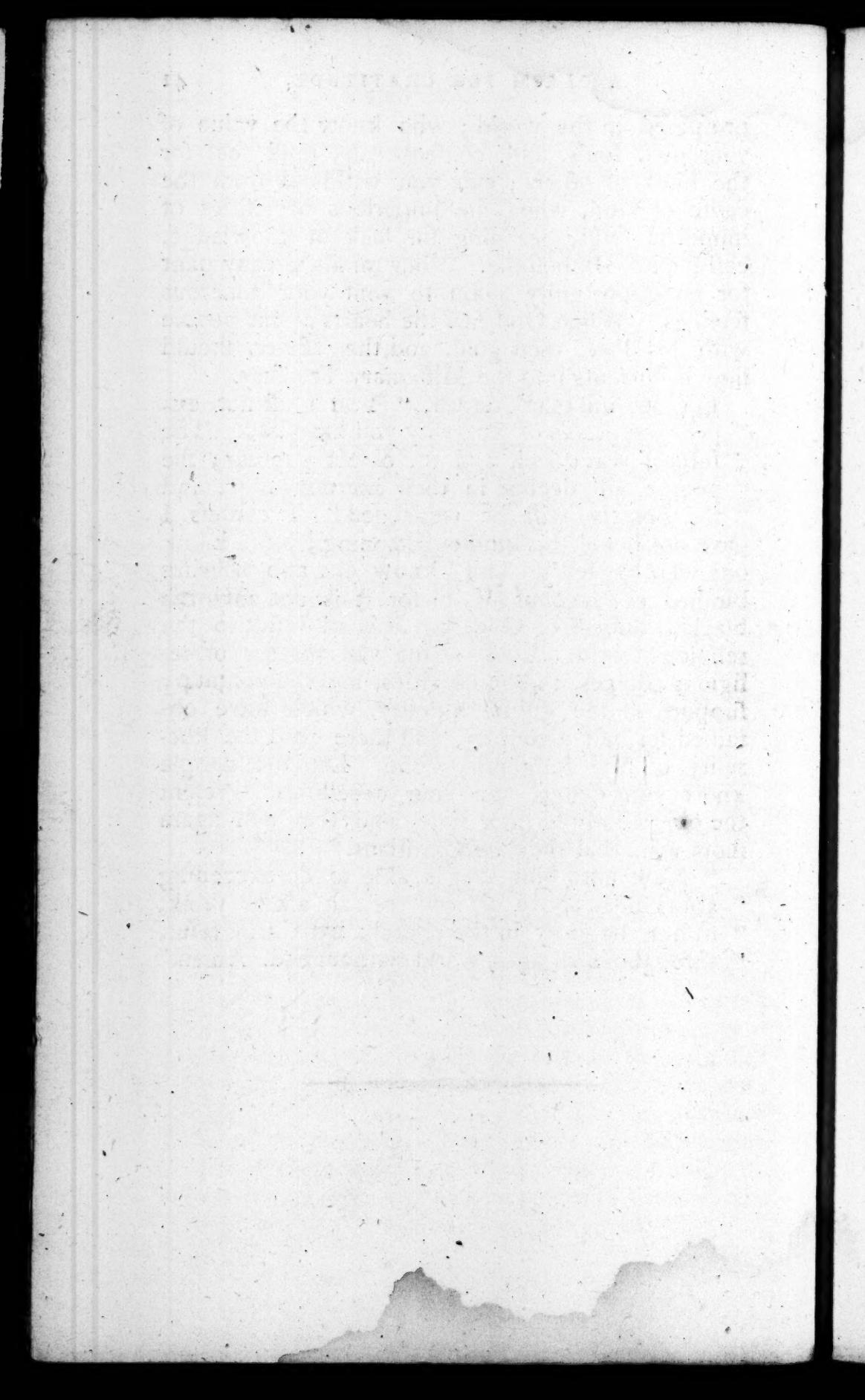
Your Society stands upon too broad a basis, and is encouraged by too many generous souls, to fail for want of support. Ye men of commerce and of opulence, will you let the Missionary cause fail for want of pecuniary aid? I am persuaded were it decent for you to answer, "No, no," would disturb our worship. Nay could I ask the question sufficiently loud for the whole religious publick to hear me, "No, no, no," would roll through the kingdom like thunder. Can you whom God has

prospered

prospered in the world ; who know the value of your own souls, and, consequently, must feel for the souls of others ; can you withhold from the cause of God, when the imperious necessities of immortal souls, perishing for lack of knowledge, call for it ? Impossible. Your minds already pant for an opportunity again to vent your generous feelings. When God fills the hearts of his people with his love, their gold, and their silver, should flow in torrents into the Missionary Treasury.

Let not unbelief suggest, " You must not expect the proofs of liberality you have had. The subject was novel, and the object popular ; the people will decline in their exertions now, and the Society will be weakened." I confess I have not heard this kind of reasoning ; but I know one who has felt it ; and I know one also who has blushed on account of it ; for it is not only the blackest distrust of God, but it is an insult to the religious world. Look at the vast number of religious edifices, public charities, and the voluntary support of the gospel ministry, which have obtained for half a century, and there read the liberality of the religious public. Let the people know your design, and your necessities. Present the object fully to their view, and they will again show you, that they are Christians.

" Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, to him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."



GRATEFUL MEMORIALS.

SERMON

PREACHED

AT A PUBLIC THANKSGIVING

OF THE

MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

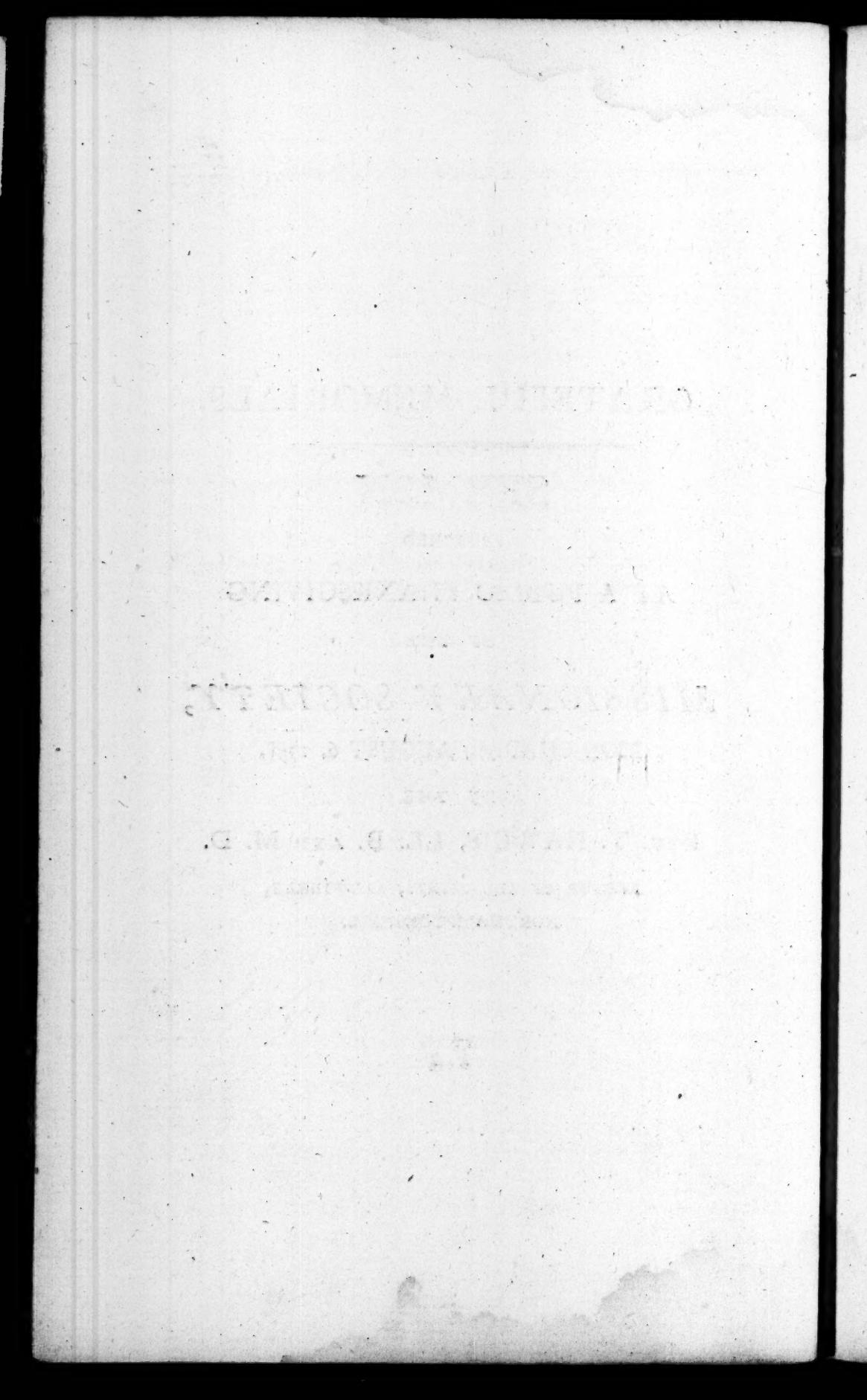
ZION CHAPEL, AUGUST 6, 1798.

BY THE

REV. T. HAWEIS, LL. B. AND M. D.

RECTOR OF ALL SAINTS, ALDWINKLE,

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.



SERMON II.

PSALM CXXVI. 3.

The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

FROM whence should the tribute of our praise ascend on this auspicious solemnity with such peculiar propriety as from this house of God, wherein our Brethren received their solemn designation for the Heathen, and went forth like Abraham, by faith, not knowing whither they went? How often and how ardently from this place hath the cry of the great congregation been heard with the other thousands of God's Israel, besieging the throne of grace, and grasping hold of the mighty angel of the covenant, Genetis xxxii. 26. refusing to let him go until he bless us. We have prevailed. The answer of peace is given. The dear objects of our solicitude are safe. Behold before you, the Captain and our Mariners, the eminent instances of God's care and love; nor less those, whose good report they bring us, seated under their cocoa nut trees and their bread fruit, and none to make them afraid.

Had it pleased our God that success had not crowned our enterprize, that our ship had hung suspended on the reef, or our Brethren sealed their testimony with their blood, the cause had been equally glorious, and the calls of duty had been nothing lessened by the miscarriage; but the

the Lord knew our feebleness and would not put us to the test. He would not that his enemies should say, there, there, so would we have it. He would make bare his holy arm, that malignity might be confounded, and envy driven into the darkest recess of her own fallen spirit to gnaw her serpent tongue. The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.

It is with sensations only known to those who pray for the peace of Zion, and feel their blessedness in her prosperity that I am this day, my Brethren, addressing you, and I am sure there is not a heart of my fellow workers who have been engaged in the Missionary Society but is wound up to like or greater joy in the Lord; nay, not a soul of this vast assembly but harmonizes with us, eager to join our thanksgivings, and on this happy occasion to cry out, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory, Amen and amen.

Hear then with wonder, love, and praise,
First, The great things done for us.

Secondly, Acknowledge the blessed doer, the Lord alone who shall be exalted by us this day.

Thirdly, Let us with the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.

Lord touch my lips with a live coal from the altar, and kindle in every heart the flames that many waters can never quench, nor the floods ever drown!

Hear then, first, the great things done for us. But who is able to express the noble acts of the Lord, and to shew forth all his praise? The tablet of memory retains only partial traces of his goodness. When the most tenacious recollection has assembled these particulars, still the half will not be told us.

With

With humble delight, my Brethren, I would lead back your thoughts to the days when the embryo of Missionary labour arose in different bosoms. The Heathen came into our minds, compassion spoke ; we said to each other, what can be done ? Who among the most sanguine had then extended his hopes to what our eyes have seen, to what our ears have heard ? Which of us would not unbelievingly have been ready to say, if this had been suggested, " If the Lord should make windows in heaven, then might this thing be ?" But the counsel was of our God who led us by a way we knew not ; and this day of small things is never to be forgotten by us. We will remember it among our signal blessings.

Scarcely had the collected embers began to discover the latent spark, and the breath of prayer fanned it to a feeble flame, when the spreading fire kindled and diffused its powerful energy on every side. Not the conflagration of enthusiastic zeal as some unkindly suggested, which blazes, consumes, and is extinguished, but the sacred " spirit of burning," Isaiah xliv. derived from him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire ; who dwelleth between the cherubims ; and at whose command " the living creatures ran and returned as a flash of lightning." Ezekiel i. 14, eager to fulfil his sovereign will in the salvation of his redeemed. Need I remind you, Brethren, of the scenes you have witnessed ? Of the thousands of God's Israel assembled ? Of the great host of his ministers of the sanctuary of various denominations, drawn by the magnetic influence of the love of Jesus and of souls purchased by his blood, and vowing to sacrifice on the altar of divine charity, the prejudices, the bigotry, and the spirit of party, which by disuniting them, had long palsied every effort of zeal for the extensive spread of the gospel among the Heathen. To those who have any deep acquaintance

tance with mankind, such union must be acknowledged a great and singular event.

Shall I mention our dear Brethren who offered themselves willingly, or the liberal bounty of those who wished to furnish a supply of their wants? Where will men be found; how shall a sufficient fund be provided? You have heard these murmurs, marvel not, reflect upon the fears and unbelief that so often sprang up in your own hearts, and in mine. But is any thing too hard for God? How speedily, how amply, how effectually was the provision made for every need, and exceeding every expectation. And shall we not tell, what great things in mercy have been shewed us? Behold the ark launched forth on the bosom of the great deep, filled with the heralds sent to proclaim the everlasting gospel, and navigated by men whose presence forbids me to say of them, what Zion's king hath recorded in his book of life.

See them now parted from the land of their nativity. The floating tabernacle gradually sinks in the horizon. They loose sight of us, and we of them, to meet probably no more, till we shall behold them assembled round the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Ah! how many anxious thoughts have filled our bosoms as well as theirs! Who of us, my dear Brethren, had dared to hope for what the present hour hath realized?

What a voyage has been completed! We received the first glad tidings from Rio Janeiro the earnest of future blessings. They had passed the torrid zone. The Sun had not smitten them by day, nor the Moon by night, Psalm Ixiii. 13. The wind had wafted them along with an uninterrupted prosperous gale; no storm had made them afraid, nor disease approached their dwelling.

But how many tedious months afterwards elapsed! How often have our unbelieving hearts dreaded to receive the tidings after which they so anxiously panted! Have you any news of the ship? How

How often have I heard and sighed to reply, none. When lo ! on the great day of our last annual assembly,—in the very house of our God,—when we were met to supplicate his favour for those who travelled by land or by water—when on our knees,—the glad, the unexpected news arrived, and was announced with delight from the pulpit to the astonished congregation—the Duff is safe arrived at China, and our Missionaries landed at the places of their destination. Joy like an electric shock darted from bosom to bosom, we burst forth into the high praises of our God. Now every day awakened fresh expectations, and hope, that deferred, had made the heart sick, gladdened every countenance, and opened the eager eye of desire. We were not disappointed of our hope ; from the Cape, from St. Helena, the glad news fled over the great deep, the sound approached us yet nearer and nearer from the harbour of Cork, “ all is well.” When lo ! the whitening sails rising in the horizon, swelling with the breath of prayer and praise, bring with the fulness of blessing, the object of our anxieties, to the haven, where it should be. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

In this voyage to tell of all his wonders my time would fail and my ability be unequal. I will just refresh your memory with the following hints of some of the great things done for us in the swiftness, the safety, the health, and the success of the voyage ; particularly respecting the great object we had in view.

First, The *swiftness* of the passage. This will be the admiration of every nautical man by profession. Who ever heard in the most prosperous voyage of the ablest navigators, 183 degrees of longitude passed in the short space of fifty-one days? Moving often at the rate of two hundred and twenty or thirty miles a day, and so steadily before the wind as seldom ever to interrupt the daily exercises of prayer and praise, of study, or repose.

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Shall we not with thankfulness admire, 2dly. the safety of the conveyance! not a mast sprung, not a yard lost, not a sail split, not an anchor left behind! To traverse more than twice the circumference of the globe, especially amidst the lurking shoals, the hidden rocks, and low islands of the Southern Ocean, must, it is well known, be full of danger. They felt it, and sometimes were at their wits end, going up to Heaven and sinking down into the deep, shook by the pealing thunder, embayed without a passage, and once suspended on the dreadful reef. I read and trembled. But he that dwelleth under the defence of the most high, shall be safe under the shadow of the Almighty. I was ashamed, humbled, comforted, exulted, when in the midst of the most awful scenes I hear one of my Brethren say, we took the wings of Faith and fled in prayer to the God of our mercies, and when we had sung an hymn, presently the storm abated and we lay down comfortable and fell asleep. Ah! " so he giveth his beloved sleep."

Thirdly, Their *health*. What a miracle of mercy hath our vessel been! of about sixty persons during nearly a two years voyage not one hath been lost: not only a hair of their head hath not perished, but those who have returned are fat and well liking; and every Man and Woman are reported in better health, than when they left the shores of their nativity. What disease, misery, and famine have we not often heard of in voyages of far less extent and duration? The great physician had determined that the inhabitants of his ark should not complain, " I am sick." Few vessels have ever been so long without touching for refreshment, or performed so vast a run, as 13,800 miles without the sight of land; but except the common well known effects of the sea, or the indisposition of an Individual, not a scorbutic complaint appeared, no spreading fever, no infectious disorder, no dangerous accident, or broken bone. Passing through climates so different,

tender women and children, many who had never seen the sea till they embarked upon it, unaccustomed to such food or accommodation, they reached Otaheite after a five months voyage without an individual sick. All the way, they had plenty of provisions, their water sweet, abundant, and never failing; and not a creature wanting any manner of thing that was good. Whilst we record the mighty acts of the Lord, let future voyagers learn from Captain Wilson what care, cleanliness, proper food, and unremitting attention can, under the divine benediction, do for the health of those who occupy their business in great waters.

But I reserve the most important particular till last, the *success* of the voyage, respecting the great object we had in view. We had passed in safety the dangers of the deep, and were ready to encounter the greater danger apprehended from the shore; not indeed by myself, or many who knew the real state of the people of these islands. We were convinced if the Lord conveyed our Missionaries in safety to the place of their destination, the work was done. Where are now the Cannibals that should devour us? Where the Heathen to seize our property and persons? Where the helpless infants with their mothers a prey to savage arms? These vain terrors at least, Brethren, are dissipated. I need not tell you the reception we have met; welcomed as angels from Heaven, furnished with every necessary for subsistence, for comfort; heard with reverence, and courted as if our favour and friendship was the first of blessings. I use no exaggeration, I recite simple facts, known and reported by our highly esteemed Captain and his associates, and by every Journal of the Missionaries themselves. The news of our intended residence among the Otaheitans and the other Islanders was received with transport. The King and every Chief crowded round our Missionaries; the whole land was before them; they had to chuse the Goshen where they

would set up their tents. Set up their tents do I say? Behold a spacious mansion surrounded with bread fruits, cocoa nuts, and the beautiful egee apple ready prepared for their reception sufficient to accommodate immediately the whole body of Missionaries. They are met on the beach by the King and his Chiefs, led by the hand amidst the croud of surrounding and admiring natives, and not only put in possession of such an abode, but the whole district of Matavia with all its produce solemnly ceded to them for ever; a territory sufficient to maintain ten thousand persons. Each Chief is eager to secure the friendship of the individual Missionaries, and as their Tyos to invest them with their authority, and admit them to a participation of all they possess. So far from danger or subjection to tyrannical or savage rule, the Lord hath made them princes, in a fort, in all the lands of the Heathen whither they have gone. It was mocking said—the trees I suppose produce hot rolls for breakfast. It is true, thole who ventured to these distant lands little thought what they should eat, or what they should drink; yet it is singular that our Brethren with united voice declare their bread fruit is every morning prepared for them, and equal to the nicest white bread in England. But they have applied it to a nobler use; the admiring heathen have seen it broken as the symbol of our most sacred mysteries, and received by the holy Brethren, as the body of their Lord, and the pledge of his dying love.

But I may not detain you with a thousand particulars, which a speedy publication will more at large detail to the public. I will only add these are the least of our Missionary mercies. The natives have shewn the most uncommon attention from the greatest to the least of them. They frequent in multitudes our worship, confess our God to be greater than their own, and desire to know more of him and his word. Though we can only yet preach through an interpreter and by translations, which

which we begin to read to them in their own tongue ; and which they hear with reverence, and say, they generally understand. They have already brought their children for instruction, and our school is opened ; many know all their letters, and begin to join them with great docility. The chief priest of the country most friendly to the Missionaries, seconds their instructions, assuring the people it is, *My Tye* good, and says they must amend their manners. I am, says he, too old to learn ; but our children will be taught all these wonderous performances which we see, and know the speaking book.

The Missionaries have not manna rained indeed round their tents, but they have meat as sweet as the quails ; and bread fruit, cocoa nut, and a multitude of vegetables brought daily ; and a two fold provision for the sabbath, much more than they can possibly consume ; and which are distributed to the servants and natives. Our Brethren are active, they have acquired much of the language, have formed themselves comfortable residences, and every day are employed in labours, to make known his name and to proclaim his glory, for whose sake, they have gone forth to the Heathen with their lives in their hands ; and proved the truth of his promises in a measure, of which we have no adequate conception. Whosoever will lose his life shall preserve it, Luke xvii. 33, and whosoever hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for my name sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and inherit everlasting life.

Unable to enter into farther particulars, I shall only add as the result of the fullest enquiry and intelligence, that nothing can appear more promising than the beginning of our labours in these isles of the sea. The fields indeed appear white for harvest, they regard us as beings of a superior order ; they feel and confess their own inferiority ; they hear

hear us in silent awe ; and they seem ready to embrace our message, as soon as we are able to communicate it to them. Indeed the dreadfulness of the situation of the Heathen in a moral view, as will shortly appear, makes the call of duty on our part the more imperious ; and the salvation of their bodies, as well as souls, must render our labours among them peculiarly acceptable. Shall I mention but one trait more. The dear infants, and (there is another born,) are peculiar objects of their care and careesses ; and the Mydedee no Taheite, the Otaheitan child, as they desire she may be called, is embraced and gazed on with delight by every native.

But I must have done : not that I fear to weary your patience with these recitals, but that I may come to the

Second head of my discourse, "That God hath done great things for us ;" and we must be blind and insensible indeed, if we did not confess that they are marvellous in our eyes, and give him the entire glory. I may now venture to say with confidence, and shall not fear contradiction, that this hath God done, and we perceive that it is his work—No doubt his spirit awakened up our minds to the attempt—We have now passed the awful moment of suspence, through evil report, and good report—I shall be no longer charged as eutopian or enthusiastick, when I assert, Brethren, that the measures you pursued were the dictates of wisdom, as they breathed the divine spirit of philanthropy which planned and executed them ; even infidels must admire, and adversaries be confounded. I may, because it is only the tribute of deserved praise, declare, that the Captain and his officers have fulfilled the trust committed to them with an ability, perseverance, and fidelity, that no thanks of our Society are adequate to express. I may add, the Missionaries themselves, compassed as they are with infirmities as men, have approved themselves in

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the highest measure to their Brethren; have proceeded on their work in the several places of their destination, with a zeal we cannot but admire; and amidst the snares, and peculiar temptations, to which they have been exposed, and which youth and human passions made us dread, more than all other dangers combined, they have conducted themselves with a purity of conversation that we can never too much commend, or sufficiently bless God for his preserving grace. Brethren, on the most diligent enquiry I can make, I am assured, that for six months of trial, exposed to all the fascinations of enticement, not one charge has arisen, or suspicion been entertained, of the unsullied chastity of the Missionaries left in the different islands—the burning fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar had less danger than the seductive importunities of Joseph's mistress. But have I forgotten the object I proposed; and am I launching out in commendation of the men, and the instruments employed? No. They are produced merely as testimonies of the great power of God in the midst of us—the salvation and the glory are all his own—we feel this moment transcendent delight in ascribing it to him—we would not rob our God of the full tribute of his praise—the work which is done upon earth, he doeth it himself. I am confident, my Brethren, I speak the sentiments of every heart, that we are more jealous of this kind of sacrilege, than ever our adversaries can be in their suspicions of us. We are abundantly rewarded, in being the happy instruments of good to the Heathen; and we confess ourselves unworthy, and less than the least of all God's mercies. Directors, Captain, Missionaries, to us all belong this day shame and confusion of face before him, with whom we have to do. He knows the unbelief, the fears, the mistakes, the undue tempers, with which we have been often chargeable before him. But we bless him for the success which hath attended our efforts; and, assured

sured that he pitieith our infirmities, and pardons our iniquities, we can truly say, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us—but unto thy name be the praise.

Yet let us not shout for victory: the great enemy of souls, however foiled by our weakness, and our Immanuel's power, retires for a moment only to concert his wiles afresh, and call us to renewed conflicts. Let not him, therefore, that putteth on the armour, boast as he that taketh it off. Nothing but the continued care and keeping of our covenant Jehovah can perfect the begun blessing; bring wisdom out of our ignorance; strength out of our weakness, and glory out of our humiliation. Hitherto he hath helped us—We will turn to the rock which is higher than we. Jehovah Nissi is the name, in which we will still lift up our banners, and as we often sing,

We'll take to ourselves all the shame,
And give all the glory to thee.

Thirdly, Therefore let us with the multitudes of the isles be glad, Isaiah xliv. 23. Sing O ye Heavens, for the Lord hath done it. Break forth into singing, ye mountains of Christina and Otaheite, ye ever verdant forests, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. Doth it become well the just to be thankful? then surely never did an occasion arise to call forth purer joy, and more exalted praise. The Lord is making bare his holy arm, his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the Heathen. The isles are waiting for his law. The great trumpet of gospel grace is blown, the sound is gone forth to the ends of the earth. As soon as they hear of me, says our Jehovah, they shall obey me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. Ah! Brethren, do not your hearts burn with you at the tidings you have heard, and joining in one vast burst of praise and adoration with angels and archangels, and all the company

company of Heaven? Can we but shout around the throne, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Methinks I see you, Brethren, sinking beneath the load of gratitude. Sensations, too big for utterance, swell every bosom; and is not every hand lifted up with solemn adjuration, Psalm, cxxxvii. 5. If I forget thee, let my right hand forget its cunning; yea, if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! Yes, my dear friends, ours shall not be the barren tribute of the song we raise; we will praise him not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving ourselves up to his service, and devoting our bodies, souls, and spirits, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service, Rom. xiii.

Renew your efforts, ye men of God of this Society, to spread farther and wider that adored, that endeared name which is as ointment poured forth. Exercise your wisdom, rouse all your zeal, cement your happy union, arise with renewed vigour to the help of the Lord against the mighty; think nothing yet done, where so much remains to be accomplished; a thousand islands, millions, myriads of immortal souls, are yet crying to you, “ Come over and help us, Acts xvi. 19.

Come forth, ye spirits of the just, burning with love of Jesus, and zeal for the salvation of mankind. Ye ministers of flame, that wait on his sanctuary, cherish the divine impression, that prompts to this arduous service. Rise up to lead the faithful warriors to renewed conflicts. Ye faithful, whom the Lord hath furnished with ability and zeal to build up the ark of his church, the smiths, the carpenters that smooth the planks, as well as the architects that plan the fabric, awake, as in the ancient days. Ye men of science in every department, especially in medicine and surgery, shew yourselves: the miseries of the diseased, and the dying cry aloud for your healing hand. Ye ready labourers all,

thrust in the sharp sickle, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe; and he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life; verily your reward shall be great in Heaven. O! that the people might offer themselves willingly—the silver and the gold are his. Pour them in, that nothing may be wanting to further the progress of a work so happily began. The Lord of Hosts is evidently with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Up then, and be doing.

The time is short; whilst we are deliberating thousands are lost—the work is great—the King's business requireth haste, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.



